

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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O R 141455Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6257

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8184

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, GR

SUBJ: PM CARAMANLIS SETS DECEMBER 8 FOR PLEBISCITE ON
MONARCHY ISSUE

1. IN PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED TELEVISED CAMPAIGN SPEECH
EVENING NOVEMBER 13, PM CARAMANLIS PROCLAIMED
DECEMBER 8 AS DATE FOR PLEBISCITE ON MONARCHY ISSUE.
ALMOST ALL MORNING ATHENS NEWSPAPERS NOVEMBER 14 HEADLINED
STATEMENT.

2. WHILE PM'S SPEECH TOUCHED ON NUMBER OF OTHER ISSUES
AS WELL, ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLEBISCITE DATE CLEARLY MOST
DRAMATIC FEATURE. ALLEGING THAT HIS OPPONENTS WERE
PERSISTENTLY ATTEMPTING INSERT QUESTION OF FORM OF
GOVERNMENT INTO CAMPAIGN, PM STATED THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN
JUSTIFIED ONLY IF NEW PARLIAMENT WERE TO DECIDE MATTER.
HE REMINDED AUDIENCE, HOWEVER, THAT GREEK PEOPLE WILL
DECIDE THIS FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE THEMSELVES IN SPECIAL
REFERENDUM. ACCUSING HIS OPPONENETS OF SEEKING CREATE
CONFUSION IN MINDS OF ELECTORATE BY INTERMINGLING QUESTIONS
OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS AND FROM OF REGIME, PM STATED
THAT "I SHALL ALLAY THE HYPOCRITICAL FEARS OF MY OPPONENTS
BY INFORMING THEM THAT THE NEW DEMOCRACY, ON GAINING
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POPULAR CONFIDENCE, WILL CALL ON YOU TO EXPRESS YOUR

OPINION ON THE FORM OF THE REGIME, FREELY AND WITHOUT
BIAS, ON DECEMBER 8."

3. AT LEAST ONE ND CANDIDATE TOLD EMBOFF RECENTLY
THAT PM WAS AWARE OF "RELATIVE WEAKNESS" OF ND POSITION
OF NEUTRALITY ON MONARCHY QUESTION AND THAT IN ANTICIPATION BOTH
CENTER UNION AND PASOK (ATHENS 8117) WOULD TRY TO EXPLOIT
THIS ISSUE, PM HAD DEVISED A NEW FORMULA FOR HIS PARTY'S
STAND ON ISSUE. APPARENTLY CALL FOR EARLY PLEBISCITE
IS KEY INGREDIENT IN THIS "NEW FORMULA".

4. AS NOTED IN EARLIER REPORTING (ATHENS-7344 AND 8006),
CONSTITUENT ACT EARLY OCTOBER PROVIDED THAT (A) WITHIN
FIFTEEN DAYS AFTER PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, PLEBISCITE
DATE MUST BE ANNOUNCED AND (B) THAT WITHIN THIRTY DAYS
AFTER SUCH ANNOUNCEMENT, ACTUAL VOTE MUST BE HELD ON
MONARCHY ISSUE. PLEBISCITE COULD THUS HAVE BEEN
SCHEDULED AS LATE AS JANUARY 1, 1975. FACTS THAT PM
HAS MOVED SO QUICKLY TO ANNOUNCE DATE FOR PLEBSCITE AND
THAT DESIGNATED DATE COMES SO SOON AFTER PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS, MAY REFLECT CARAMANLIS' CONVICTION THAT
POTENTIALLY DIVISIVE CHARACTER OF THIS ISSUE REQUIRES
ITS EARLY DISPOSITION, THUS ALLOWING GOVERNMENT TO
DEVOTE FULL ENERGIES TO PRESSING FUNDAMANTAL PROBLEMS
OF BOTH DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERN.
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